



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

VOLUME XXXVI

JUNE, 1921

NUMBER 6

SHAKSPERE'S PURPOSE IN DROPPING SLY¹

A solution satisfactory to all scholars for the early disappearance of Sly is yet forthcoming.² The play as it stands naturally leaves something to be desired, for it obviously is not well rounded out. To account for this flaw many suggestions have been made, some of them being less plausible than others. Ulrici thought that the dramatist intended the closing of the old farce, *A Shrew*, to be reproduced in his own, a statement that rightly has been questioned.³

It does not seem probable that Professor Schelling's recent observation⁴ is the key to the solution, namely, that the dramatist wearied, dropping the adventures "when the play within the play

¹The problem of authorship, even though collaboration is assumed, is not involved, for the drunken tinker appears in both "accepted" and "spurious" parts. For a discussion of the authorship of *The Shrew* see my forthcoming volume.

²End of I. i.

³See R. W. Bond's statement in *The Shrew* (Arden ed.), 32 n. See further Bond's sane objection to Fleay's highly ingenious theory (*ibid.*). Schomburg, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Halle, 1904, 8 f., lists others. Cf. also Mrs. C. C. Stopes, *Athenaeum*, June 11, 1904, 763; *ibid.* (reprinted article) *Shakespeare's Industry*, 1916, 145. She finds in the play a satire: the Lord and not Justice Shallow is a fling at Sir Thomas Lucy (143, 149). Chas. Knight, *Studies of Shakspeare*, 1851, 146 f., has a suggestion which is at least novel: "Had Shakspeare brought him (Sly) again upon the scene, in all the richness of his first exhibition, perhaps the impatience of the audience would never have allowed them to sit through the lessons of the 'taming school.'"

⁴Cf. Boas, *A Shrew*, 1908, ix f.

was at an end.”⁵ There was no need of any great creative work; in fact *A Shrew* contains all the necessary remarks of Sly, speeches that the later playwright might have used had he wished. For indeed he borrowed freely from the Induction of the old work, helping himself to this good bit and that as was his practice in general.⁶ Moreover it is difficult to imagine Shakspeare’s tiring of one of his comic creations. It would be more plausible to assume that the poet was guilty of carelessness, a charge to which he was to lay himself open (to all appearances) even in his mature dramas.⁷ But this reason seems unsatisfactory also, since the tinker plays not a small part in the Induction, and (as we shall later see) his exit seems carefully planned.

Elze⁸ and others have remarked that the end was lost. The difficulty with this view is that Sly should appear somewhere between his dropping out of sight (close of I, i.) and the epilogue. This he actually does in the older play. It is hardly conceivable that he should merely “sit and mark”⁹ silently for nearly five acts. If he is too drowsy to make comments,¹⁰ he is also too sleepy to stay awake. He was too garrulous a creature to remain unheard. Neither could he have slept through four or more acts, and then make remarks. There would be nothing *apropos* for him to say: he had witnessed none of the taming scenes; in fact he had not even seen Petruchio. He could hardly point a moral¹¹ when he had not had a glimpse of the tamer! Probably the best theory is that stated by Professor Neilson: “in the necessity of clearing the gallery, from which Sly is viewing the stage for the appearance of the Pedant from a window in v. i.”¹² This theory,

⁵ “The Common Folk of Shakespeare,” in *A Book of Homage to S.*, Oxford, 1916, 370.

⁶ Cf. Bond., *op. cit.*, 3 n.

⁷ For a partial list, see my study, *op. cit.*

⁸ Preface to Tieck’s trans. in Ulrici’s ed. of Schlegel and T’s *Shak.*, 7th ed., 1877, vii, 10. Elze seems to think that the “Fortsetzung” of Sly was likewise lost, but he drops the matter at that point. Cf. Schomburg, 8.

⁹ Stage directions (end of I. i.).

¹⁰ See *ibid.*

¹¹ Cf. Sly’s moral in the epilogue of the old play. See *infra* for further remarks.

¹² Introduction to *The Shrew* in the Cambridge ed. of Shakespeare’s plays; cf. Schomburg, 9.

however, conflicts with evidence (shortly to be presented in full) that Shakspeare in the beginning deliberately planned Sly's exodus.

Is not the solution of the problem to be found in the belief that the drunken tinker was dismissed for artistic (and psychological) reasons? ¹³ To imagine *The Shrew* with Sly's occasional remarks, let us see what the author of *A Shrew* has actually done. Greater exhibition of improbability and lack of realism could not well be found. No sooner is the rogue completely intoxicated than he is asked to witness a play; his observations are to be based on life in the academic city of Athens. But being in a stupor he is naturally in no fit condition to witness a theatrical performance. To complicate matters his physical condition grows worse, since he calls repeatedly for more "small ale." ¹⁴ Yet through the greater part of the spectacle he remains mentally alert and imperturbable. ¹⁵ Not until near the close of the fourth act does drowsiness overcome him, and he falls asleep, ¹⁶ being carried out at the close of that act. Though he misses entirely the final, and important, act in which the audience sees the shrew completely conquered, he appears in the epilogue to point the moral.

For Shakspeare to have pursued a like method would have been a transgression of all laws of realism. Let us see what changes were made in the composition of *The Shrew*. The Induction opens with Sly completely intoxicated just after he has been put out of an ale house by an irate hostess. Being unconscious he is presently picked up by a lord returning from a hunt. As soon as the lord's house is reached the tinker is bathed and put in a warm bed, and then made to believe that he is a lord just awakening from a long sickness. Meanwhile a consuming thirst overcomes him, and he

¹³ Some of my remarks, independently arrived at, were anticipated by Schomburg, 9, 24-6. Elsewhere (in 'The Authorship,' etc., *op. cit.*) I have taken pleasure in indicating my indebtedness to this thorough-going piece of work. Bond in his excellent (Arden) edition of *The Shrew* (33 note) observes that Sly's return at the end of the play would be in the nature of an anti-climax. He adds that the conclusion may have been "effected . . . in dumb-show." This view of course leaves out of account the remarks Sly should make from time to time in the play.

¹⁴ Cf. Boas, *op. cit.*, 5, 6, 21, 53, 64 (wine).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 48 f., 53.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

begins to call for "small ale."¹⁷ Under these circumstances Sly is obviously not fit to play his part for long, though (as has been shown) not realized by the author of the old drama. But Shakspeare was too familiar with the power of the "invisible spirit" for that: Falstaff's famous apostrophe to sack as well as the drinking scenes in *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and elsewhere, is proof on that point. We are not surprised to learn, therefore, that when the comedy for his benefit is about to begin he lapses into a state of lethargy, for he now reverts to prose after several speeches of blank verse; and that at the close of the first scene he is not only bored but has actually been nodding. Shakspeare consequently was remaining firm on the rock of human nature; there was nothing else to do, provided he was to remain true to his art.¹⁸

Another, in some ways more important, reason for the tinker's disappearance is the following. His presence and comments would dissipate the spectator's interest in a remarkably clever and entertaining plot. The title of the farce is significant: not (as in the old play) the taming of *a* shrew, but of *the* shrew.¹⁹ In making the change Shakspeare presumably had a purpose (cf. 'The Winter's Tale'). Is it too much to suggest that the dramatist wished to compose a farce that should be a masterpiece? This is what he was to do in the other types of drama; and it may not be wholly without significance that *The Shrew* was probably his last farce.²⁰

¹⁷ Cf. sc. ii, l. 77.

¹⁸ Schomburg (24) notes that Sly's lack of the "cultural background" makes one wonder how he could have enjoyed a play even like *The Shrew*. It is interesting in this connection that Sly in *A Shrew* was familiar with the theater (Boas, 7); and equally important that the later dramatist makes him ignorant of it (sc. II, 139 f.). At all events, it is not surprising that the tinker should nod at a play localized in the shadow of an Italian university; for it must be remembered that Sly never sees the tamer: the first scene (the only one witnessed by Sly) is largely taken up with Lucentio, who is about to matriculate at Padua University. Luce (*Handbook to S.*, 1906, 193) observes that the author of *A Shrew* saw the inconsistency in having comments by a drunken rogue, and as a result makes Sly remark at the close of the play that 'I dreamt upon it all this night.' A clumsy device, to say the least.

¹⁹ Lest it be thought that Sly (as well as his creator) is being taken too seriously, see Aydelotte, 'Eliz. Rogues and Vagabonds,' *Oxf. Hist. and Lit. Studies*, 1913, especially p. 42. See also chapter (and bibliography) on 'Rogues' in *Shakespeare's England*, 1916.

²⁰ Unless *M. Wives* is an exception, a play that raises many queries.

As for scattering the interests of the audience, Shakspeare throughout his plays was a master in centering attention. Everywhere in his best comedies and tragedies there is one characteristic—a unity and welding of the whole piece. This singleness of effect is, according to Creizenach,²¹ the outstanding feature in Shakspeare. His contemporaries seek “separate effective situations,” and not an “organic whole.” A notable instance occurs in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The flattening out of subordinate characters and events (the latter sometimes completely obliterated) is at times amazing. MacCallum²² in his masterly treatment of the play, observes how the facts of history are warped to suit the dramatist’s purpose: that nothing must interfere with the overpowering infatuation of the Roman for the “serpent of old Nile.” And again the same writer notes that everything is done “to concentrate the attention on the purely personal relations of the lovers.”²³ In *Macbeth*, to mention but one other instance, this unity of impression is got with consummate skill. Bradley,²⁴ in speaking of the ironing out process of minor personages, sees no reason “why the names of the persons should not be interchanged in all the ways mathematically possible.”

Now *The Shrew* exhibits this quality to a high degree. Scholars beginning with Dr. Johnson have praised the superb handling of the various threads of the play. In fact the parts are not distinct, but one and indivisible. The closing scene of the farce is in this respect unsurpassed even in Shakspeare. Every detail, particularly noticeable in the last dozen lines, is carefully managed. The final speech, led up to by two or three preceding speeches, is perfect in its focussing of interests. The compactness of these few lines, the rapid dénouement, the breathless interest all testify to Shakspeare’s plan of welding the various parts of the farce into a perfect whole. If the poet then reveals such care in this matter could he possibly have wished to defeat his very purpose

²¹ *The English Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Eng. transl., 1916), 260-3.

²² *The Roman Plays*, 2 ed., 1910, 338-366; cf. Creizenach, 261.

²³ MacCallum, 339.

²⁴ *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1910, 387; cf. Quiller-Couch, *Shakespeare’s Workmanship*, 1917, 44-8. Cf. also my remarks on this point in ‘*The Shrew*,’ *op. cit.* *Much Ado* likewise reveals this quality at every turn.

by introducing Sly? He wanted totality of effect, a characteristic, as we have seen, of his mature works. The only way to have it was to sacrifice everything in favor of the tamer and the shrew; for it does not seem probable in view of these facts that Shakspeare would permit a puppet to engage the attention of the spectators. *The Shrew* with him would have a defect; without him it is a finished piece of work.²⁵

Furthermore, there is evidence of a definite nature indicating that the dramatist while composing the Induction deliberately planned Sly's dismissal. We have seen that the rogue was physically and mentally beyond his depth: his closing remarks (end of i. i.) reveal his drowsiness and boredom:

First Serv. My lord, you nod; you do not mind the play.

Sly. Yes, by Saint Anne, do I. A good matter, surely; comes there any more of it?

Page. My lord, 'tis but begun.

Sly. 'Tis a very excellent piece of work, madam lady: would 'twere done!

From these lines it would seem clear that the poet had no further intention of keeping the tinker.

Additional testimony of a peculiarly interesting character supports such a view. The reference in the Induction of the old play²⁶ to the moral *A Shrew* would furnish all husbands has been entirely omitted by Shakspeare. This omission can hardly be accidental. Moreover scholars have observed that the old play rounds out completely; but has the nature of the conclusion been carefully noted? Making all due allowances for a drunken and illiterate rogue's

²⁵ One recalls Hamlet's "And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them," etc.; cf. Schomburg, 9. For further discussion on the defect of the play as it stands, see *infra*. It is interesting to note that none of Shakspeare's tragedies contains an epilogue. Of the comedies four (with *Twelfth Night* which ends with a song by the Clown) end with one; but in each case the words are spoken by a chief character: *All's Well*, by the King; *As You Like It*, by Rosalind; and *Tempest*, by Prospero. It is obvious therefore that the closing words in each instance, spoken as they are by a main personage, have a definite relation to the play. It is also of importance to observe that none of these three comedies depends for its chief interest upon its plot.

²⁶ Boas, 4. The title is also given, of which there is no trace in *The Shrew*.

inability to keep awake, we yet have the inartistic ending of *A Shrew*, namely, its lesson.

- Sly.* Who's this? Tapster? Oh, lord, sirrah, I have had
 The bravest dream to-night, that ever thou
 Heardest in all thy life!
- Tapster.* Ay, marry, but you had best get you home,
 For your wife will course you for dreaming here to-night.
- Sly.* Will she? I know now how to tame a shrew!
 I dreamt upon it all this night till now,
 And thou hast waked me out of the best dream
 That ever I had in my life.
 But I'll to my wife presently
 And tame her too, and if she anger me.

That Shakspeare on artistic grounds could have retained such an ending is, in the light of his other plays, highly improbable. To be sure the author of the old play has done well enough with the moral as such. But that is not the problem before us. Shakspeare, in omitting the allusion to it in his Induction, did not intend that *The Shrew* should point a lesson, Hazlitt notwithstanding. Let us grant for the moment that Sly's benediction would not have dissipated the interests of the audience; it yet would have been an inartistic ending, wholly unlike anything in Shakspeare. Therefore, once granted that the moral could not be superimposed, what excuse was there for keeping Sly on the stage? He had never, it will be remembered, seen a play,—another touch in *A Shrew* which was dropped by Shakspeare.²⁷ Unlike Polonius, therefore, he could not criticise its art. Nor could it be in the manner of a climax to have him dismiss the spectators, with the request that he be left alone with his wife. And it certainly would be an anti-climax to have the play end with another of his requests for ale! What, therefore, *could* he say or do?

Of course, the question Why did the poet write the Induction at all? still remains. There is, when all is said and done, the imperfection. Apparently he saw the difficulty early, if indeed not from the beginning. For, if the observation above is correct, he planned the dismissal of the rogue in the Induction. At any rate, the humorous references to the Midlands—seemingly reminiscences of his youth—indicate that the poet enjoyed the writing of this

²⁷ See *supra*.

prologue. The added concreteness and richness of detail, in which the framework of the source is clothed with flesh and blood, is likewise of the poet's best. One noticeable improvement stands out, in the substitution of the hostess for the tapster of *A Shrew*; and the dialogue that follows between the drunken tinker and the hostess foreshadows what is soon to come in the scenes at the Boar's Head Tavern. Of irksomeness and weariness, therefore,²⁸ no hint appears in this preface.

Assuming that the dramatist may have seen from the first the inevitable imperfection, we may imagine that he argued in one of two ways. He could have reasoned that the flaw was not venial; no one can urge that the slip is worse than some others that might be mentioned: for instance the untimely disappearance of old Adam, as well as the Fool in *Lear*.²⁹ Indeed these two apparent blunders seem the result of carelessness or indifference, for (unlike Sly to all appearances) no provision for their going had been made. Obviously in the very nature of the form the bit of inartistic fault in *The Shrew* is more conspicuous. However, it is unlikely that Sly, anymore than Adam or the Fool, was missed by the audience, and Shakspeare did not write for critics of another age. The spectators, once engrossed in the doings of the tamer and the shrew, forgot all about the tinker. Or, in the second place, the poet may have argued that he would like to try his hand at an innovation. Quiller-Couch has shown, in a stimulating book,³⁰ that the dramatist throughout his career never wearied of experiments. Inasmuch as an Induction does not appear in any other play, Shakspeare may have wished to see the effect of one on the audience. It lay before him in his source; why not use it? Why not, especially, when *A Shrew* as we know,³¹ was popular. The choice of a theme familiar to his audience upon which to build a comedy or tragedy was, moreover, his usual practice.

At all events, the lively and graceful lines in the Induction testify to his pleasure in composing it; the spectators presumably

²⁸ Cf. Schelling, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Unless one assumes that his famous closing words (III, vi.) are in reality his swan-song, a view not satisfying to students of the tragedy.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, 202 ff.

³¹ There were three contemporary editions,—1594, 1596, 1607 (cf. Boas, *op. cit.*, intro.).

were entertained by it, forgetting all about Sly in their enjoyment of the inimitable farce to follow. Hence, for all practical purposes the rogue had served his usefulness, in that he had given a novel setting to a good play. In short, the Induction had furnished a farcical atmosphere for a farcical story. The way to the dramatist was then left open to write a farce that has proved to be his masterpiece, in which he was to obtain a totality of effect that the tinker's presence would make impossible; a farce, the technique of which equals the master's best achievements in comedy and tragedy.³²

ERNEST P. KUHL.

Goucher College.

NATURE IN EARLIER ITALIAN

The allegorical figure Nature did not play so conspicuous a part in early Italian literature as it did in other literatures, though it appeared more strikingly than in early German. In a previous article¹ I have shown how the figure arose among Greek writers under the name *Physis* both as a personification and as a personage more or less divine associated with the creation of life in the world. After its establishment in the encyclopedic or scientific pre-Socratics, it assumed its greatest and most permanent significance as an agent of God, through the influence of the Platonic dialogue *Timaeus*. Thus, often with moral application, it was repeatedly employed by Latin authors of the classical and medieval periods, as by Seneca, a representative of Stoic, by Statius, a poet of epic situations, by Claudianus, composer of satires and panegyrics of an allegorical sort, and by the Latin humanists and allegorical poets of the twelfth century. The chief among these last, so far as effect on Italian literature goes, was Alan of Lille, whose works *Anticlaudianus* and *De Planctu Naturae* exerted a tremendous influence on medieval allegory. And in the thirteenth century came the more purely encyclopedic and philosophic studies of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.

³² It is true of course that Sly is not disillusioned (cf. Freeman, *Disguise Plots in Eliz. Drama*, 1915, 10). But the same charge can be brought, for example, against Molière in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*.

¹ "Nature in Earlier Periods," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, xix.